

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**AFGHANISTAN: OPIUM CULTIVATION AND ITS IMPACT ON RECONSTRUCTION**

by

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## ABSTRACT

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For more than twenty years, Afghanistan reigned as one of the world's leading sources of illicit opium. Lack of governance, civil unrest and instability contributed to the country's dominance of opium cultivation and trade. Shortly following 9/11 and fall of the Taliban, a new Afghan governmental structure was formed. The establishment of a democracy in Afghanistan charts a new era for the country and could potentially set in motion a movement to abolish cultivation and trade of opium. Afghanistan's challenge however, to establish a secure and stable government directly impacts on its status as the worlds' largest source of illicit opium. This paper examines the nexus between Afghanistan's opium economy and government authority as well as the impact they have on post conflict reconstruction. Key areas include a historical perspective of the country's political environment and opium economy, the Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan & the United Kingdom's drug control policy, and US drug control policy for Afghanistan. If Afghanistan is to succeed as a nation-state devoid of an illicit opium economy, it must prevent deterioration of the central authority of the government.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| ABSTRACT.....   | iii |
| AFGHANISTAN: OPIUM CULTIVATION AND ITS IMPACT ON RECONSTRUCTION ..... | 1   |
| INTRODUCTION.....   | 1   |
| THE EARLY YEARS OF OPIUM .....  | 1   |
| SOVIET INTERVENTION .....   | 2   |
| RE-BIRTH OF AFGHANISTAN'S OPIUM ECONOMY.....                          | 2   |
| OPIUM BOLSTER TALIBAN'S TREASURY .....                                | 4   |
| NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT .....   | 4   |
| DRUG CONTROL POLICY .....   | 5   |
| CONSTITUTIONAL LOYA JIRGA .....                                       | 8   |
| OPIUM ERADICATION .....   | 8   |
| ALTERNATIVE CROPS.....  | 9   |
| INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT.....  | 9   |
| CONCLUSION .....  | 10  |
| RECOMMENDATIONS.....  | 11  |
| ENDNOTES .....  | 13  |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY .....  | 17  |



## AFGHANISTAN: OPIUM CULTIVATION AND ITS IMPACT ON RECONSTRUCTION

In the past quarter century, Afghanistan has found itself at the crossroads of international terrorist violence and has become a major contributor to world narcotics production.

—Antonio Maria Costa

### INTRODUCTION

In 2002, one year after the Taliban regime effectively stemmed the cultivation of opium, Afghanistan's interim government witnessed the largest opium harvest in the country's history. This occurred in spite of the government's countrywide ban on opium poppy cultivation.

In 2001, the United Nations (UN) recorded Afghanistan's opium cultivation at 184 metric tons, down 3091 metric tons from 2000.<sup>1</sup> In 2002, production resumed at high levels reaching 3400 metric tons.<sup>2</sup> The UN Office on Drugs and Crime 2003 report indicates that Afghanistan produced 3,600 metric tons that year, up six percent from the previous year.<sup>3</sup> Because of revived complicity in opium production among the provincial warlords, remnants of al Qaeda and the Taliban, Afghanistan has once again produced three-quarters of the world's illicit opium, and if left unabated will affect post conflict reconstruction.<sup>4</sup>

Why has Afghanistan re-emerged as the world's largest source of illicit opium, and what implications will it have on the country's reconstruction? An examination of Afghanistan's historical connection with opium will explain why opium cultivation has re-emerged as a pernicious threat in the post Taliban Afghanistan. In order to eliminate the opium market in Afghanistan, the US must employ a multifaceted strategy which incorporates all elements of national power (Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic) to expand the Afghan government's central authority and legitimacy. The strategy must focus on: weaning Afghanistan from its socio-economic dependence on opium; expanding central government authority throughout Afghanistan; recognizing a cost savings at the global level and; an Information Operations campaign that addresses how growing poppy is un-Islamic and supports criminal and anti-government activity. This systematic approach will help break the cycle of opium production and significantly curtail the global narcotics market.

### THE EARLY YEARS OF OPIUM

According to Alfred McCoy, "since the sixteenth century, when recreational opium eating was first developed, Central Asia had been a self-sufficient drug market. In fact, up until the late 1970's, tribal farmers in the highlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan grew limited quantities of opium and sold it to merchant caravans bound west for Iran and east to India."<sup>5</sup> In 1870, along



the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) border of Afghanistan 1,130 acres were cultivated for opium. During the colonial era, Britain encouraged opium cultivation throughout its provinces in India. However, the UK government later reversed its approval of opium cultivation in the NWFP because the opium economy became divisive and contributive to the Pashtun warriors' resistance to British rule. In 1901, the British successfully dissipated opium cultivation in the NWFP. However, they did allow the import of Afghan opium from Jalalabad into the NWFP for personal use.<sup>6</sup> "In 1908, a British source reported opium cultivation in the four Afghan districts--the Herat Valley, Kabul, Kandahar, and Jalalabad."<sup>7</sup> Even though opium cultivation in the four districts remained limited, by the end of colonial rule in 1947, Afghan opium production for Central Asia was well established.<sup>8</sup> It was not until the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan in 1979 however, that Afghan opium production exploded onto the world stage.

### **SOVIET INTERVENTION**

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 animated several countries, notably the US and Pakistan, to assist the Afghan resistance. Soviet influence over the Marxist government of Afghanistan and potential threats to Pakistan's territorial integrity concerned both Pakistan and the US.<sup>9</sup> "With a hostile India on one side and a Soviet-occupied Afghanistan on the other, Pakistan was in danger of physical isolation,"<sup>10</sup> and a potential target for Soviet invasion in the future. Pakistan was also fretful over the influx of Pashtun and Baluchi refugees from Afghanistan and the inevitable alliances with their tribesmen in the NWFP of Pakistan. The Pakistanis viewed this as a security concern that could one day threaten the integrity of the Durand Agreement.<sup>11</sup> The US concern was geostrategic in nature because Washington viewed the Soviet invasion as a threat to the Persian Gulf oil fields.<sup>12</sup>

### **RE-BIRTH OF AFGHANISTAN'S OPIUM ECONOMY**

At the behest of Pakistan, the US agreed to support a nascent Afghan insurgency to expel the Soviet military from Afghanistan. In 1980 the Carter administration offered Pakistan \$400 million to assist Afghan resistance. Pakistan rejected the assistance as "peanuts" and began to fund the insurgency with money from wealthy Afghan refugees that had made their money in opium cultivation within the NWFP.<sup>13</sup> The Reagan administration eventually provided a three-billion dollar military aid package and in 1981, which prompted Pakistan to ban the cultivation of opium in the NWFP.<sup>14</sup> The NWFP however, remained a major conduit for opium from Afghanistan to Europe and America.

Pakistan recognized seven Afghan resistance groups collectively known as the mujahideen.<sup>15</sup> Sunni was the religious affiliation of each group, four of them Islamist and the

other three traditionalist. The Islamist's were radical and favored a unified Afghanistan that practiced fundamental Islamic principles, while the traditionalists preferred national liberation.<sup>16</sup> Of the seven groups, Pakistan convinced the US to support Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami, since it was the best trained, organized, and most disciplined of the mujahideen groups. Pakistan believed Hekmatyar was the ideal candidate for establishing a Pakistan-oriented client state in Kabul after the war because he did not champion the issue of reunification of NWFP to Afghanistan.<sup>17</sup> "This issue was crucial to Pakistan because the problem of NWFP and the uncertainty concerning the Afghan-Pakistan boundary had complicated relations between these two countries since the foundation of Pakistan in 1947."<sup>18</sup> Without Hekmatyar in power, the status of NWFP would continue as a point of friction since Afghanistan never recognized the Durand line drawn by the British in 1893 that arbitrarily separated Pashtun tribes in the region.

The US covertly provided two billion dollars for military aid through the Pakistani Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) agency, on top of a formal three-billion dollar aid package for Afghanistan. The ISI was responsible for distributing weapons to Afghan resistance groups. Hekmatyar's guerrilla forces received over fifty percent of the arms transported to the region, which exacerbated the already antagonistic relationship between him and other Afghan commanders and further fueled the current warlordism Afghanistan experiences today.<sup>19</sup> In addition to US support, Hekmatyar trafficked illicit opium to finance his resistance against the Soviets and as a way of increasing his power base over other Afghan commanders.<sup>20</sup> Hekmatyar's dominance in the region led other mujahideen commanders to participate in the trade of illicit opium to finance their fight as well and contributed to Afghanistan's socioeconomic and political dependence on opium. Afghan commanders controlled the agricultural regions of the country and forced farmers to grow opium poppies, which doubled the country's opium harvest to 575 tons between 1982 and 1983.<sup>21</sup> Pakistan's complicity in the opium trade was apparent even in 1980 since sixty percent of the heroin market in the US was from Afghan opium refined in Pakistan.

By the time the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, Afghan warlords were well-established in the production and trade of illicit opium. That same year the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime recorded Afghanistan's opium production at 1,570 tons, more than double 1983's harvest. Between 1990 and 1995, the power struggle among rival warlords continued as each vied for influence and control of the country. The country's deteriorating stability during those years paralleled its rise as the world's leading producer of opium, exporting \$80 billion worth of heroin annually.<sup>22</sup> The "Warlord Period" further facilitated the Taliban movement and its closer affiliation with Osama Bin Laden's al Qaeda.

## **OPIUM BOLSTER TALIBAN'S TREASURY**

“As the Taliban movement began its takeover of the country, it developed a close relationship with major Afghani [sic] drug lords who supplied the Taliban with revenues from the drug trade and weapons to further the Taliban power base, and in return received security and a safe haven to produce opiates.”<sup>23</sup> The Taliban ultimately seized control of Afghanistan in 1996. Between 1996 and 2000 Afghanistan's opium economy steadily rose until it reached an historic high in 1999. That year the country cultivated 91,000 hectares of opium, which was seventy-five percent of the world's global output. By 2001, the Taliban government was making approximately \$50 million from opium proceeds, which comprised 55 percent of the government's budget.<sup>24</sup> In 2000, Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar inexplicably placed a ban on opium cultivation declaring the opium cultivation as un-Islamic. The ban was noticeably successful and lasted until the Taliban's fall shortly after 9/11. Some, however, question the Taliban's true motives for the ban. During a speech at Westminster Hall, Ben Bradshaw, Great Britain's Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister stated, “...that there were other motives for the ban: an attempt to consolidate the market and increase opium prices, and decrease international pressure.” In spite of the ban, “Taliban leaders held substantial reserves of processed opium and wished to drive up prices.”<sup>25</sup> The Taliban still allowed distribution of those stockpiles, which increased the opium price tenfold, allowing the government to reap the benefit.<sup>26</sup>

## **NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT**

Immediately following the Taliban's collapse from power, the United Nations (UN) selected Hamid Karzai to lead Afghanistan's interim government until the mandated elections called for by the Bonn Agreement. Under the agreement, Karzai pledged to “cooperate with the international community in the fight against terrorism, drugs and organized crime.”<sup>27</sup> To assist in this effort, several participating members of the Bonn conference pledged their support. The Italians agreed to provide assistance building a justice system. Germany became responsible for training police and security forces. The United States pledged to establish the Afghan National Army (ANA) while continuing the fight against terrorism (al Qaeda and the Taliban), and the United Kingdom elected to focus on the counter narcotics strategy. The counter narcotics initiative is no small matter since ninety percent of Europe's heroin currently comes from opiates cultivated in Afghanistan.

## **DRUG CONTROL POLICY**

In January 2001, President Karzai imposed a countrywide ban on opium cultivation and later introduced an eradication program. In addition to the Afghan-imposed ban, the Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan (ITGA) in conjunction with the United Kingdom introduced a national drug control strategy for tackling Afghanistan's illicit drug problems. "The overall objective of the strategy is to eliminate production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs in Afghanistan."<sup>28</sup> Fundamental concepts of the strategy are to develop substitute crops for poppy farmers, extend law enforcement of illegal drugs to every province in the country, develop drug legislation, create effective institutions (e.g. law enforcement and judiciary) and create prevention and treatment programs.<sup>29</sup> The United Kingdom and ITGA governments' specific objectives are:

- Long term elimination of illicit drugs cultivation, with the aim of seventy percent reduction by the year 2007, and complete elimination by the year 2012. The Government will make every effort to achieve complete elimination of illicit drug cultivation before the set target in areas where alternative livelihoods have been made sufficiently available
- Countering the trafficking, processing, and distribution of narcotic and psychotropic substances into, within and out of the country through vigorous interdiction and prosecution measures. Similarly strict measures should be taken against the trafficking, use and distribution of precursor chemicals into and within the country
- Increasing efforts to forfeit drug generated assets and checking money laundering
- Reducing the problematic use of legal and illegal substances through prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social integration
- Enhancing regional and international cooperation to facilitate the elimination of illegal drug production and trafficking, rehabilitation and social integration<sup>30</sup>

While the United States' post-conflict responsibility is to build the ANA and fight terrorism in Afghanistan, it cannot achieve total success without some focus on the drug war. According to John Walters, Director for White House Office of Drug Control Policy, "...drug cultivation and trafficking (in Afghanistan) are undermining the rule of law and putting money in the pockets of terrorists..." that we are trying to neutralize. For this reason, the United States supports multilateral efforts to reduce the reviving illegal opium and heroin trade in Afghanistan.<sup>31</sup> The United States has implemented the following goals in an effort to assist the United Kingdom and Afghan government combat the illicit opiate problem:

- Minimizing poppy cultivation by creating alternative livelihoods and cash-for-work programs with major sponsors, the UN and the International Financial Institutions in poppy-growing areas.
- Employing a good public affairs campaign to assure participation
- Establishing and strengthening Afghan law enforcement agencies to help interdict shipments and to destroy opium markets, stockpiles, and distribution networks
- Strengthening regional cooperation on drug interdiction using the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Operation Containment and United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) programs
- Initiating and rebuilding Afghan civil society and institutions to enable them to support programs reducing production of opium and to encourage anti-drug messages through public campaigns to prevent, drug use/abuse, and to instill support for rule of law<sup>32</sup>

The United Kingdom, Afghan and United States policies and efforts to resolve Afghanistan's illicit opium problem have met with little success. A three-year drought, exacerbated by poor irrigation systems devastated agricultural crops, and the rapid return of displaced Afghans to ruined villages and farms ravaged by years of conflict contributed substantially to the re-emergence of the country's opium economy. Before hard times farmers subsisted on crops that produced grain, barley, cotton, sugar beets, fruits and nuts. Since seventy percent of Afghans depend on agriculture as a livelihood, most governmental and non-governmental agencies have said that agriculture is one of the immediate-term goals to getting Afghanistan on the road to recovery.<sup>33</sup> None however, has come up with a lucrative crop that will provide farmers the necessary profit margin to make it worth pursuing. As an example, Afghanistan's 2003 wheat harvest was the best in years, "rain fed production climbed from 610,000 tons in 2001 to 1,345,000 tons in 2003."<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, Afghan farmers made no profit from the harvest and in most cases lost more than they gained. The price of wheat in October 2003 was \$0.16 per kilo, providing each farmer with a net income of \$60 per hectare. However, production cost was estimated at \$430 per hectare, resulting in a net loss of \$370 per hectare.<sup>35</sup> It is clear that farmers are not making sufficient enough income for the work they do harvesting wheat, and this is one of the factors contributing to the growth of opium poppy production.<sup>36</sup> Afghan farmers are deeply religious and devout Muslims that understand it is un-Islamic to grow poppy, but feel they have little choice if they are to survive economically. Consider the following comments from Mr. Abdullah, an Afghan farmer near Kabul:

I know that poppy cultivation is not good, but last year, my income from 0.25 jirib [1.15 hectares] of poppy was more than the income from 10 jiribs [46.1 hectares] of wheat. I think I deserve to get more money as my entire family is busy working in the field. Farming is the only means of life for us and why should we not try to make a good life like others. This year I plan to cultivate 6 jiribs (1.3 hectares) of land with poppy and I have already prepared the land for it...I will do it even if I am threatened with jail.<sup>37</sup>

Driven by circumstances, opium cultivation has become for many Afghan farmers' the main source of income. The earned revenue while not earth shaking by American standards certainly enhances the livelihood of poppy farmers and traffickers. As of this writing approximately, 1.7 million Afghans are involved in poppy cultivation, and 28 of 32 Afghan provinces now grow the crop for profit.<sup>38</sup> The average annual gross income of opium farmers in 2002 rose to about \$16,000 per hectare compared to \$1,500 per hectare in the 1990's.<sup>39</sup> The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2003 income statistics are even more astounding:

- Average income per opium-growing family US\$ 3,900 in 2003
- Total farm-gate income from opium US \$1.02 billion (US \$1.2 billion in 2002)
- 2003 farmers' opium income equivalent to 23% of 2002 GDP (estimated at US\$ 4.4 billion)
- Average opium income per capita for opium-growing population: US\$ 594 (three times larger than estimated 2002 GDP per capita)
- Estimated opium traffickers income in Afghanistan: at least US\$ 1.3 billion in 2003
- Farmers + traffickers opium income in Afghanistan equivalent to more than 50% of estimated GDP
- Estimated annual turn-over of international trade in Afghan opiates: US\$ 30 billion (more than half a million people involved)<sup>40</sup>

The most daunting factor contributing to the re-emergence of the country's opium economy is the prevalent state of lawlessness which endangers progress in reconstruction. The current security situation plaguing Afghanistan is reminiscent of the lawless days of warlord-dominated mayhem and inter-ethnic suspicion. Regional warlords and anti-government militia are once again vying for power and intimidating the populace. As in the past, these groups protect opium cultivation and use the crop proceeds to finance their power bases. The 2003 "poppy crop seems to be financing a fresh proliferation of weapons among the warlords."<sup>41</sup> To make matters worse, drug experts are finding evidence that profits from Afghanistan's opium economy are reviving the Taliban insurgency and the al Qaeda network.<sup>42</sup> Afghanistan's current counter narcotics law-enforcement activity is incapable of dealing with country's narcotics

problem. More importantly, the ANA is not capable of dealing with the country's unstable security posture. Even though the ANA's reported strength is between 7,000 to 10,000 soldiers, its attrition rate is so high it will not have a significant security presence for some time.<sup>43</sup>

### **CONSTITUTIONAL LOYA JIRGA**

Any long-term benefits from the current ITGA policies will fail to be realized as long as weak central authority persists, an aggressive opium eradication program along with alternative lucrative crops is not instituted, and more importantly, robust international support is not provided. On 4 January 2004, the ITGA approved a new constitution that for the first time established a democratic presidential system and two-chamber national assembly. While many praise the country's historic development, some believe that ethnic divisions will make implementation very difficult. Vikram Parekh, a senior analyst with the International Crisis Group in Kabul, fears that regional factions will ultimately undermine support for the constitution.<sup>44</sup> His concern is that the process, which led to the creation of the Constitutional Loya Jirga, did little to bridge ethnic divisions. In fact, he says, "It may have exacerbated the division by throwing the major debates on the constitution, by casting these almost entirely on ethnic lines."<sup>45</sup> These ethnic divisions, if not resolved, will further weaken the authority of what is already a tenuous government. Such a development will completely undermine the drug control strategy. If the central government lacks the legitimate authority to enforce its drug policies, the strategy becomes an exercise in futility. Hence, every effort must be made to ensure the central government succeeds in gaining the trust and loyalty of the citizenry.

### **OPIUM ERADICATION**

Afghan farmers dependent upon agriculture as a means of support are reluctant to give up opium cultivation as a main source of revenue. The United Kingdom's Compensatory Eradication Program designed to convince farmers to eliminate poppy fields for alternative crops was a complete failure. The program failed partially because farmers, who would not ordinarily grow poppies, did so hoping to receive compensation for eradicating poppy grown on their land. Perhaps the biggest reason was the donor community's failure to honor its side of the bargain by providing subsidies for alternative livelihoods.<sup>46</sup> Ashraf Ghani, ITGA Finance Minister, "described it as the single issue which had lost him most credibility within the government and in the regions affected."<sup>47</sup> Instead of focusing its initial efforts on eradication, the United Kingdom should have developed sustainable livelihoods programs. The unilateral execution of eradication programs by foreign nations, risks igniting unrest within the provinces. The Afghans' are proud people that have endured centuries of interference by other nations. Arbitrarily

destroying poppy crops could be perceived as a threat to their livelihoods. To neutralize the Afghan perception of foreign interference, the Afghan government must take the lead regarding crop eradication and antinarcotics law enforcement. Eradication can only succeed in the long term if Afghans can make a living by other means.

### **ALTERNATIVE CROPS**

The UN unintentionally undermined the domestic wheat market by mismanagement of the alternative crops program. The current program must build flexibility into the system to make allowances for domestic crops that recover from the three-year drought. Despite the abundant wheat harvest in 2003, Afghanistan's domestic wheat prices were undercut by surplus wheat imported by the UN. To make wheat production economically viable in the future, the United Nations must use domestic wheat to feed the general population before importing foreign sources of wheat. Now that Afghanistan is experiencing a surplus of wheat, the United Nations and international donors should sponsor its grain for export. There are world markets that can benefit from Afghan grain. The European Union will need to import millions of tons of grain through June 2004.<sup>48</sup> "Europe's wheat, maize and barley supplies are dwindling after spring droughts and a scorching summer heat wave shriveled harvests across the continent."<sup>49</sup> There is of course, always a need for grain in the famine stricken countries of Africa. Afghanistan as the leading exporter of grain will surely gain economically. Afghanistan was once a leading exporter of raisins, grapes, melons and other fruit before the 1999 drought. Perhaps the United Nations and international donors should focus on this niche market as alternative crops. Subsidies for these alternative crops, however, are paramount in order to yield greater profits for farmers than the poppy market. Given the tremendous budgets the United States and European States devote to combating drug trafficking, the money earmarked for subsidies, no matter how exorbitant, will likely be relatively small. Hence, expenditures aimed at eliminating the growth of opium will likely be much smaller than combating opium and its by product once on the market.

### **INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT**

At the Tokyo conference held January 21-22, 2002, the World Bank estimated that Afghanistan needed \$15 billion for the next five years. The international donors present pledged \$4.5 billion for five years to support the Afghan reconstruction effort, but only a fraction of that was earmarked for the country's drug control program. Afghanistan's opium revenue reached \$1.2 billion in 2002, a figure higher than the assistance provided that same year by international donors.<sup>50</sup> The White House has expressed concern about Afghanistan's opium



economy, but has not yet provided any substantial financial support to counter the problem. Paradoxically, the 2003 White House Drug Control Strategy allocated \$731 million to the Department of State for the Andean Counterdrug Initiative and \$25 million to the Department of Defense to support Colombia's counterdrug activities.<sup>51</sup> The 2004 Drug Control Strategy allocates another \$731 million towards the Andean Counterdrug Initiative.<sup>52</sup> However, neither strategy has budgeted any money to stop a thriving Afghan opium economy that is likely providing financial assistance to al Qaeda and the Taliban. President Karzai, during a February 2004 conference on drugs, said the "country's fight against the heroin trade is being hampered by insufficient international funding."<sup>53</sup> He estimated that his government would need \$300 million to eradicate the country's opium economy and provide farmers with alternative crops.<sup>54</sup> Because the key to combating illicit opium lies at its source every effort should be made by the United States and international donors to provide President Karzai's government the necessary financial assistance he needs to combat the illicit drug problem in his country.

## **CONCLUSION**

Post Taliban Afghanistan has re-emerged as the world's leading source of illicit opium. Very little of the money pledged by international donors for support has been identified for counter narcotics programs. Lack of adequate financial support affects the government's ability to establish central authority, implement viable alternative crops and effective law enforcement programs to counter the increasing rise of opium cultivation. Alternative livelihoods have failed to materialize and were unintentionally undermined by the United Kingdom and United Nations. As witnessed by the United Kingdom's botched eradication buy-back program and the United Nations flooding of Afghanistan's market with surplus wheat that undercut domestic market prices. Lawlessness threatens large sectors of the country and is exacerbated by warlords that reap financial wealth from illicit drug trafficking. In this regard, the legitimate authority of the Afghan government is crucial to establishing law and order in all provinces. As the country becomes more entrenched in the illegal drug market the Taliban and al Qaeda forces will continue to use drug trafficking to finance their movement as the mujahideen did in its struggle against the Soviet Union. Islamic radicalism continues to threaten peace and security throughout the world, and as in the past, Afghanistan remains a decisive point in this war. Like the past, the United States and Pakistan are accused of indirectly supporting Afghanistan's opium economy by providing monetary support and arms to regional warlords in their fight against terrorism. If left unchecked, Afghanistan's 2004 opium output will likely top this year's 3,600 metric tons, and all 32 of the Afghan provinces will feel obligated to participate in

harvesting poppy crops. The danger emerges that Afghanistan could potentially become a narco-terrorist state if its opium economy is not brought under control. To arrest the resurgence in opium production, the United States and its allies must develop a multifaceted strategy. The strategy must exhaust all elements of national power to increase the Afghan government's central authority and legitimacy.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Diplomatically.* The US must pressure neighboring states to close their borders to drug trafficking. Border closings will not completely shut down Afghanistan's opium market, but it will make it more difficult for traffickers to get their opium to processing labs in neighboring countries and onward. In addition to encouraging Pakistan to assist in the fight against terrorism, the United States must also press it to shut down its borders to Afghan warlords that use processing labs and storage facilities along the border of the NWFP. More importantly, the United States must work with the Afghan government to sever the warlords' financial base, which is partially responsible for keeping the country's opium economy prosperous. International security assistance was not addressed in this paper, but in August 2003 NATO assumed command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and control of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT). Under the current mandate and conditions, NATO is limited in its ability to provide the necessary security required to extend the Afghan government's authority beyond Kabul. Given the limitations, the UN Security Council should review the mandate and consider extending the reach of the PRT's. Additionally, as a long term member of NATO the US must work with the NATO leadership to encourage allies to provide the necessary capability to ensure the Alliances' success.

*Information.* The United States must assist the ITGA engage in an Information Operations (IO) campaign that hits at the heart of Afghan values. The Taliban was partially successful with reducing Afghanistan's opium production by declaring it un-Islamic to harvest. The ITGA should develop a similar campaign that not only focuses on how growing poppy is un-Islamic but how it also supports criminal and anti-government activity. As a complementary theme, a media campaign should stress the illegality of growing poppy and the idea that for a few pieces of silver a farmer can lose his soul to opium. The campaign should also assure the Afghan people that the United States, United Nations, NATO and other international donors will not abandon them before socioeconomic reforms are established through out Afghanistan.

*Military.* Because of the danger of sparking an uprising, the US-led coalition forces fighting terrorism should have a minimal role in counter drug operations. Their support should

be limited to the destruction of opium labs and storage facilities that are encountered during combat operations, if intelligence links the sites to the Taliban or al Qaeda. The United States should also actively assist the Germans in the training of Afghan Police forces and consider the possibility of training a counter narcotics task force capable of executing eradication operations for the Central Government in order to accelerate law enforcement training.

*Economic.* The United Nations should establish a working group to study the cost-benefits regarding crop subsidies to wean the Afghans off poppy cultivation. The working group should factor in the associated costs involved in domestic and international counter-drug and law enforcement activities. In the broader realm, seemingly exorbitant subsidies may prove less expensive than combating the drug market directly.

If needed reforms and an executable strategy to deal with the country's illicit opium economy fail to materialize, Afghanistan will remain the world's leading producer of heroin and participating members of the Bonn conference will fail to achieve post conflict reconstruction objectives. On the other hand, an achievable strategy will expand the government's central authority and will be a roadmap to abolishing Afghanistan's poppy cultivation and opium trade.

WORD COUNT=4789

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> United Nations. Office on Drugs and Crime. "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem, Executive Summary." January 2003. p.1

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> United Nations. Office on Drugs and Crime. "Afghanistan: Opium Survey 2003." October 2003. p.5.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*. p.1

<sup>5</sup> Alfred W. McCoy, *Interplay of CIA Covert Warfare & the Global Narcotics Traffic.*"; available from <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/REGIONAL/IAS/documents/mccoyrevision.doc>; Internet; accessed 20 February 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred W. McCoy, "The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade." (Chicago, IL.: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003), 467

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*. 468

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

<sup>9</sup> Emdad-ul M. Haq, "Drugs in South Asia: From the Opium Trade to the Present Day." (Chippenham, Wiltshire.: Anthony Rowe Ltd, 2000), 185.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Tanner, "Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban." (New York, NY.: Da Capo Press, 2002), 250.

<sup>11</sup> When British India was partitioned (1947), Afghanistan wanted the Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province, who had been separated from Afghan's Pashtuns by the Durand Agreement of 1893, to be able to choose whether to join Afghanistan, join Pakistan, or be independent. The Pathans were only offered the choice of joining Pakistan or joining India; they chose the former. In 1955, Afghanistan urged the creation of an autonomous Pathan state, Pushtunistan (Pakhtunistan). The issue subsided in the late 1960s but was revived by Afghanistan in 1972 when Pakistan was weakened by the loss of its eastern wing (now Bangladesh) and the war with India.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Scott, "Drugs, Oil, and War." (Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 29.

<sup>13</sup> Haq. 187.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>15</sup> Martin Ewans, "Afghanistan: A New History." (Richmond, Surrey.: Curzon Press, 2001), 154.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>17</sup> Pervez Hoodbhoy, "The Genesis of Global Jihad in Afghanistan;" available from [www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/REGIONAL/IAS/documents/hoodbhoypaper.doc](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/REGIONAL/IAS/documents/hoodbhoypaper.doc); Internet; accessed 9 February 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Alfred McCoy, and Alan Block, "War on Drugs: Studies in the Failure of U.S. Narcotics Policy" (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press Inc, 1992), 323.

<sup>19</sup> McCoy, The Politics of Heroin, 476.

<sup>20</sup> Scott, 49.

<sup>21</sup> McCoy, The Politics of Heroin, .479.

<sup>22</sup> Doug Lorimer, "Afghanistan: World's Largest Source of Heroin," 2 July 2003; available from <http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/2003/544/544p14.htm>; Internet; accessed 6 January 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Douglas Davids, "Narco-Terrorism: A Unified Strategy to Fight A Growing Terrorist Menace" (Ardsley, NY.:Transnational Publishers Inc, 2002), 30.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Peter Scott, "Heroin, Drug Warlords Reappear on Afghan Scene," 1 January 2002; available from [http://www.finalcall.com/perspectives/afghan\\_drugs01-01-2002.htm](http://www.finalcall.com/perspectives/afghan_drugs01-01-2002.htm); Internet; accessed 2 February 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Ben Bradshaw, "Combating the illegal drugs trade in Afghanistan," 10 January 2002; available from <http://www.ukun.org/articles.html>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2004.

<sup>27</sup> United Nations, "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions," 5 December 2001; available from <http://www.uno.de/frieden/afghanistan/talks/agreement.htm>; Internet; accessed 5 October 2003.

<sup>28</sup> Counter Narcotics Directorate, Transitional Islamic Government of Afghanistan. "National Drug Control, Strategy," March 2003, 5.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.* 12.

<sup>31</sup> George W. Bush, "National Drug Control Strategy, Update 2003." (Washington, D.C.: The White House, February 2003),13

<sup>32</sup> United States Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, "Counternarcotics and Law Enforcement Country Program: Afghanistan," 2 May 2003.

<sup>33</sup> United States Agency for International Development, "Rebuilding Afghanistan: Agriculture Projects Have Quick Impact."

<sup>34</sup> United States Agency for International Development, "Rebuilding Afghanistan: Weekly Activity Update 13-19 November 2003," 19 November; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/7ba3e24d06660ce885256de400783afe?OpenDocument.htm>; Internet; accessed 8 February 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Famine Early Warning System Network. "Afghanistan: Monthly Food Security Update Sept-Oct 2003," October 2003; available from <http://www.fews.net/centers/current/monthlies/report.htm>; Internet; accessed 7 February 2004.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "2003 Opium Survey," 5.

<sup>39</sup> United Nations. Office on Drugs and Crime, "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem," 7.

<sup>40</sup> 2003 Opium Survey. 5.

<sup>41</sup> Sudha Ramachandran, "Afghanistan's Opium Wars," Asia Times, 8 December 2003, available from <http://www.e-ariana.com/ariana/eariana.nsf/allArticles/6AC78E70FAE413BC87256DF600.htm>; Internet; accessed 6 February 2004.

<sup>42</sup> Liz Sly, "Opium Cash Fuels Terror, Experts Say," Chicago Times, 9 February 2004; available from <http://ebird.afis.osd.mil/cgi-bin/ebid/displaydata.pl?WGSID=BLUFDGFUTON.htm>; Internet; accessed 10 February 2004.

<sup>43</sup> According to a January 2004 Australian Broadcasting Corporation article, a third of the ANA force deserted upon completion of training.

<sup>44</sup> Esfandiari Golnaz, "Afghanistan: Loya Jirga Approves Constitution, But Hard Part May Have Only Just Begun," Radio Free Europe, 5 January 2004; available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2004/01/mil-040105-rferl-162921.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2004.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> United Kingdom Parliament, House of Commons., Select Committee on International Development, "Drugs," session 2002-03; available from [http://www.parliament.uk/about\\_commons/about\\_commons.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/about_commons.cfm); Internet; accessed 14 February 2004.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> David Evan, "EU Needs to Accelerate Grain Imports in 2004," Agriculture Online, 12 December 2003; available from [http://www.agriculture.com/worldwide/IDS/2003-12-19T163015Z\\_01\\_L19515969\\_RTRI](http://www.agriculture.com/worldwide/IDS/2003-12-19T163015Z_01_L19515969_RTRI); Internet; accessed 18 February 2004.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem," Executive Summary, January 2003.

<sup>51</sup> White House 2003 National Drug Control Update

<sup>52</sup> George W. Bush, "National Drug Control Strategy, Update 2004," (Washington, D.C.: The White House, February 2004) 37.

<sup>53</sup> ABC Radio Australia, "Afghanistan Says More Funds Needed For Fight Against Heroin Trade," [www.abc.net.au/ra/newstories/RANewsStories\\_041560.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/ra/newstories/RANewsStories_041560.htm); Internet; accessed 10 February 2004..

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

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